

Meeting Summary
October 19, 2011 - Approved

Members Present: Sanita Alrey-DeBose, Melissa Brown, Robert Caggiano, Joseph Capuano, Sean Gabaree, Chelsea Johnson, Michael Kallens, Larysa Kurylas, Sara Lappano, Zoe Lefkowitz, Chris Lindsay, Tom Martin, James Mensah, Manuel Ochoa, Susan Petersen, Dianne Whitaker

Members Absent: Louis Choporis, Regina Dull, Jonathan Fink, Patrick Naehu, Erin Roberts

Guests: Jim Agliata, on behalf of Westfield, LLC; Christopher Todd and Dean Wilson, on behalf of Alliance Realty Co.; Ana Lopez van Balen, Director, Mid-County Regional Service Center; Karla Silvestre, Resource Coordinator, Office of Community Partnerships; Dolores Ustrell-Roig, Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity; Marian Fryer and Linda Ament, on behalf go Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC); John Jenkins, on behalf of Kensington Heights civic Association; Ash Kosiewicz, on behalf of Latino Economic Development Corporation (LEDC); Fernando Garavito, on behalf of CASA de Maryland; Mario Perla, on behalf of Triangle Jewelers; Herbert Quinones, on behalf of General Insurance Agency; Juan Melgar, on behalf of Chicago Bakery; Jose Gonzalez, on behalf Libreria Emanuel; Luis A. Bonilla on behalf of Choice Electronics; and Jim Onder, on behalf of Onder Communications

Call to Order: The meeting convened at 7:06 p.m.

- Susan Petersen, Vice-Chair, presided over the meeting, welcomed all in attendance and advised that translation was being provided for the benefit of members of the public in attendance who did not speak English.

Approval of September Meeting Summary – A motion to approve the meeting summaries, subject to a spelling correction, was made by Mr. Kallens and seconded by Mr.Caggiano. The motion passed unanimously.

Alliance Realty Company – Christopher Todd, an architect for Alliance Realty advised the committee that Alliance had entered into a contract for the purchase of Avalon Bay Communities' property, located at Georgia and Blueridge Avenues. Alliance is currently performing its due diligence for purchase. Assuming the sale occurs, Alliance plans a residential development, tentatively titled "Broadstone Wheaton". Mr. Todd Provided the following information:

- The site is 3.65 acres and includes only Avalon Bay's property, no other.
- 246 residential apartments are planned.
- The apartment mix will be primarily 1-bedroom and studio/loft apartments. Some 2-bedroom units will be available, but not many. Unit mix is driven by market demand
- Structured parking, providing 340 spaces will be surrounded by the apartment units. The parking ratio of 1.3 spaces per unit was questioned, citing the Safeway/Patriot project, with a ratio of less than 1:1. Mr. Todd explained that

a greater distance to Metro- approx 1/4 mile – increased the likelihood that there would probably be a slightly higher number of residents who continued to rely on automobiles.

- As a result of conversations with Planning Department staff, a 12-foot wide pedestrian walkway is planned to run the north-south width of the project, from the adjacent WMATA parcel(north) to Blueridge Avenue (south). The walkway will border the eastern side of the planned parking structure allowing closer pedestrian access to residents located in the central and eastern portion of the complex. The walkway would also provide the opportunity for future pedestrian connectivity, should the WMATA parcel ever be developed.
- The northwestern boundary of the property, which will border Elkin Street will be open space for the complex' residents. A dog park is a current consideration for some of the space.
- The target market is Gen-Y, young adults in their 20's, beginning their careers. They are attracted to urban-like environments, are less auto-dependent, and are willing to accept less living space in return for additional amenities.

Westfield LLC – Jim Agliata, Vice President of Development for Westfield provided the following update:

- The Costco project increases Westfield's investment in Wheaton to approximately \$ 170 million since it acquired the Mall
- The Hecht's building is being demolished and a new 2 level building is being constructed. Permits have already been pulled. Costco will occupy the 2nd floor.
- Costco's tenancy has attracted other national and regional retailers – Panera Bread, Elevation Burger and H&M. Dick's sporting goods is negotiating 80,000 square feet on the 1st level of the new building.
- Access to Costco can only be gained through the mall itself. Westfield wants its mall tenants to capitalize on Costco's customers. Costco customers will be able to exit directly to the parking lot, but must enter through the mall.
- Westfield is working to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility in the area of the Costco parking. An extended sidewalk, with 'some greening' is planned for the west side of Costco. It will extend into the parking lot but will not link to the Ring Road.
- Westfield contends that for the foreseeable future the mall proper will continue to remain auto-centric. It resists the suggestion that sidewalks should border the ring road, contending the level of use would not justify the expense.
- The project will comply with 100-year flood plane stormwater requirements
- Mr. Agliata indicated that the focus of the presentation was the Costco store itself. The proposed fueling station, which Costco is seeking, was being addressed through the Special Exception process.
- As a condition of the County's financial assistance to Westfield for the construction of the new building, which will replace Hecht's, Westfield continues to meet with community members to discuss their concerns. The next meeting will be Oct 25 at the Kenmont Swim Club.

Redevelopment Report: Mr. Klein reported the following:

- **Sector Plan Work Session** – The County Council’s Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee first Work session was held on September 26. The PHED discussed transportation issues, density, and appropriate zoning in transitional neighborhoods. PHED will meet again on October 31st to further discuss the Wheaton Sector Plan. Issues to be addressed: the Kensington View neighborhood, transitional zoning, open space, and environmental issues. Council staff anticipates that this will likely be the last work session on Wheaton Sector Plan. It’s possible the full Council could vote on the Sector Plan as early as November. **Design Guidelines** – The Planning Board will discuss the Draft Design Guidelines at its October 6 meeting. WRAC is addressing the Guidelines via the Project Review Subcommittee. Mr. Klein suggested that WRAC send a letter to the Board.
- **Wheaton Sector Plan Design Guidelines** – The Planning Board addressed the Draft Urban Design Guidelines for the Wheaton Sector Plan on October 13 and continues to clarify the relationship between the design guidelines the Draft Sector plan. Mr. McGinnity who attended the session, advised that community comments – including a recent letter from WRAC – call for greater specificity within the Design Guidelines, although to varying degrees. The Board also encouraged Planning staff to revise text that might be too technical for the general public to understand.
- **B.F. Saul Co./Wheaton’s New Downtown** – Mr. Klein reported encouraging news on the project. On October 13, 2011, the Planning Board voted to include \$200,000 in its Capital Improvements Program request to identify its building requirements in consideration moving M-NCPPC headquarters from Silver Spring to Wheaton as part of the Wheaton’s New Downtown project.
- Jones, Lang, LaSalle provided the County and WMATA with a draft framework for assessing the fiscal impacts of the B.F. Saul project. Engineering studies are being conducted which will provide all parties with a clearer understanding of project costs, enabling General Development Agreement negotiations to move forward.
- **Ennalls-Price Roadway Connection** – the County plans to retain Whitman, Requardt & Associates for a Facility Planning study. The Phase I Facility Planning study should be completed by next spring. Connecting Ennalls Avenue and Price Avenue, as proposed in the Draft Sector Plan, will improve the downtown grid, and help facilitate the Wheaton’s New Downtown development.
- **Coalition for the Fair Redevelopment of Wheaton** – LEDC, in coordination with Impact Silver Spring, Casa de Maryland, Crossway Community and Clinica Proyecto Salud, is that advocating jobs, small business support, affordable housing, maintaining services, and multicultural diversity in redevelopment programming, uses and design. be part of the County’s negotiations in redeveloping downtown Wheaton. Mr. Klein noted that Representative of the Coalition were present at the meeting. He also commented that the County is aware of these efforts and will be developing a plan to address these concerns.

In light of Mr. Klein’s comments and the members of Coalition who were in attendance for the meeting Ms. Petersen invited Manny Hidalgo, Executive Director of Latino Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) to briefly address the Committee. Mr. Hidalgo reiterated the organizations/interests comprising the Coalition and indicated that concerns regarding the impact of development by the proposed public/private partnership

for Wheaton's New Downtown had brought the groups together. Mr. Hidalgo indicated that many of the Coalition's concerns had been voiced months earlier but no specific response to these concerns had been forthcoming from the public/private partnership. The Coalition was circulating a petition that would be presented to the County Executive. On behalf of the Coalition Mr. Hidalgo was requesting that WRAC consider supporting the petition. He then invited some members of the coalition to briefly express their concerns. Representatives spoke on behalf of Casa de Maryland, Proyecto Salud and small businesses, expressing their concerns about the impacts to their respective organizations/groups and requesting that specific remedies to the impacts be detailed. Ms. Petersen indicated that the Economic Development Subcommittee should consider the Coalition's concerns and requests and report back at the November WRAC meeting. Mr. Capuano, Chair of the Economic Development Subcommittee advised it would be the primary consideration for the next subcommittee meeting.

Subcommittee Reports – Ms. Petersen asked the respective chair of each subcommittee to report out on issues each committee was addressing:

- Economic Development – Mr. Capuano indicated that the committee's October meeting focused primarily on staff updating new members on the committee's efforts to date. The majority of Economic Development committee members are newly appointed to WRAC, including the Chair. Looking forward the committee would consider The Coalition for Fair Redevelopment's petition at its next meeting and advise the full WRAC accordingly
- Project Review – Ms. Petersen advised that she was still looking for a member of the subcommittee to replace her as Chair, since assuming new responsibilities as WRAC's vice Chair. Project review continues to monitor revisions to the Design Guidelines and will begin to review the Existing Wheaton Streetscape Standards, last revised in 2002
- Planning & Visioning – Mr. Martin reported that the group met on Oct 3 and discussed Council Updates to the Commercial – Residential Zone (ZTA 11-01). The committee discussed the long-term vision for Wheaton as addressed in the 2010 Request for Qualifications and the Master Plan. It also considered what might be developable large blocks in Wheaton.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.